



The lower Delaware River flows through the very heart of the birthplace of our great nation. Every bend in the river speaks to us of history, of beauty, of opportunity. Our nation's history is revealed in the agricultural fields, forests, canals, villages, mills and inns along its path. Diverse flora and fauna thrive on its banks and islands. Yet today the Delaware River supports one of the country's largest concentrations of population and industry. Our challenge is to manage the growth and use of the corridor and its resources to protect its outstanding character

Concerned about the future of the lower Delaware River, interested citizens and organizations encouraged their representatives in the United States Congress to authorize a study of the river. This document presents the results of the Lower Delaware National Wild and Scenic River Study, authorized by Public Law 102-460. It summarizes the extensive resources associated with the lower Delaware River, the River Management Plan, and the eligibility and suitability of the study segments for National Wild and Scenic River designation.

The National Wild and Scenic Rivers Program is designed to provide river protection through the combined efforts of private landowners and other citizens, river related organizations, and all levels of government. Emphasis is given to protection of landowners' rights. Designation does not open private lands to public access, nor does it affect existing uses of private property. Each designated river receives permanent protection from federally licensed or assisted dams, diversions, channelizations, and other water resource projects that would have direct and adverse effects on the river's free-flowing condition or outstanding resources.

Eligibility and Suitability

Before a river can be added to the National Wild and Scenic River System, it must be found both eligible and suitable. To be eligible, the river must be i) free-flowing; and ii) possess at least one "outstandingly remarkable" resource value, such as exceptional scenery, recreational opportunities, fisheries and wildlife, historic sites, or cultural resources.

The suitability determination is based upon strong support for designation, particularly municipalities, development of a practical management framework, and that wild and scenic designation must make sense for the river in question.

River Management Framework

The Lower Delaware River Management Plan does not contain a prescription for every situation that could confront river managers. Instead, it provides a vision for the future of the river and context for future action, that emphasizes local control and home rule. The heart of that vision is expressed in the following six goals carefully crafted by the Management Plan Committee:



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Goal 1: Water Quality
Maintain existing water quality in the Delaware River and its tributaries from measurably degrading and improve it where practical.
- Goal 2: Natural Resources
Preserve and protect the river's outstanding natural resources, including rare and endangered plant and animal species, river islands, steep slopes and buffer areas in the river corridor and along the tributaries.
- Goal 3: Historic Resources
Preserve and protect the character of historic structures, districts and sites, including landscapes, in the river corridor.
- Goal 4: Recreation
Encourage recreational use of the river corridor that has a low environmental and social impact and is compatible with public safety, the protection of private property and with the preservation of natural and cultural qualities of the river corridor.
- Goal 5: Economic Development
Identify principles for minimizing the adverse impact of development within the river corridor.
- Goal 6: Open Space Preservation
Preserve open space as a means of maximizing the health of the ecosystem, preserving scenic values, and minimizing the impact of new development in the river corridor.

To assure implementation of the River Management Plan, the creation of a management committee and a citizens advisory committee, coordinated by the existing Delaware River Greenway Partnership, is suggested. An underlying principle is that existing institutions and authorities provide the foundation for long-term protection.

The study did not consider the section of the river between Washington Crossing and the Poquessing and Rancocas creeks (southern border of Bucks county) for national designation. However, at the direction of the United States Congress that portion of the river is included in the river management framework.



Study Recommendation

The following river sections are eligible and suitable for designation, thus are recommended for designation into the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System:

Segment D: The portion of this segment from river mile 193.8 to the northern border of the city of Easton, PA (approx. 10.5 mi., 16.9 km) – Recreational

Segment F: The segment from a point just south of the Gilbert Generating Station to a point just north of the Point Pleasant Pumping Station, excluding the section parallel to the border of Alexandria Township, NJ (approx. 12.5 mi., 20.1 km) – Recreational

Segment G: The segment from the point just south of the Point Pleasant Pumping Station to a point 1000 feet north of the Route 202 bridge (approx. 6.3 mi., 10.1 km) – Recreational

Segment H: The segment from a point 1750 feet south of the Route 202 Bridge to the southern border of the town of New Hope, PA (approx. 1.9 mi., 3.0 km) – Recreational

Segment I: The segment from the southern boundary of the town of New Hope, PA to the town of Washington Crossing, PA (approx. 6 mi., 9.7 km) – Recreational

Segment L: Tinicum Creek (approx. 14.7 mi., 23.7 km) – Scenic

Segment M: Tohickon Creek from the Lake Nockamixon Dam to the Delaware River (approx. 10.7 mi., 17.2 km) – Scenic

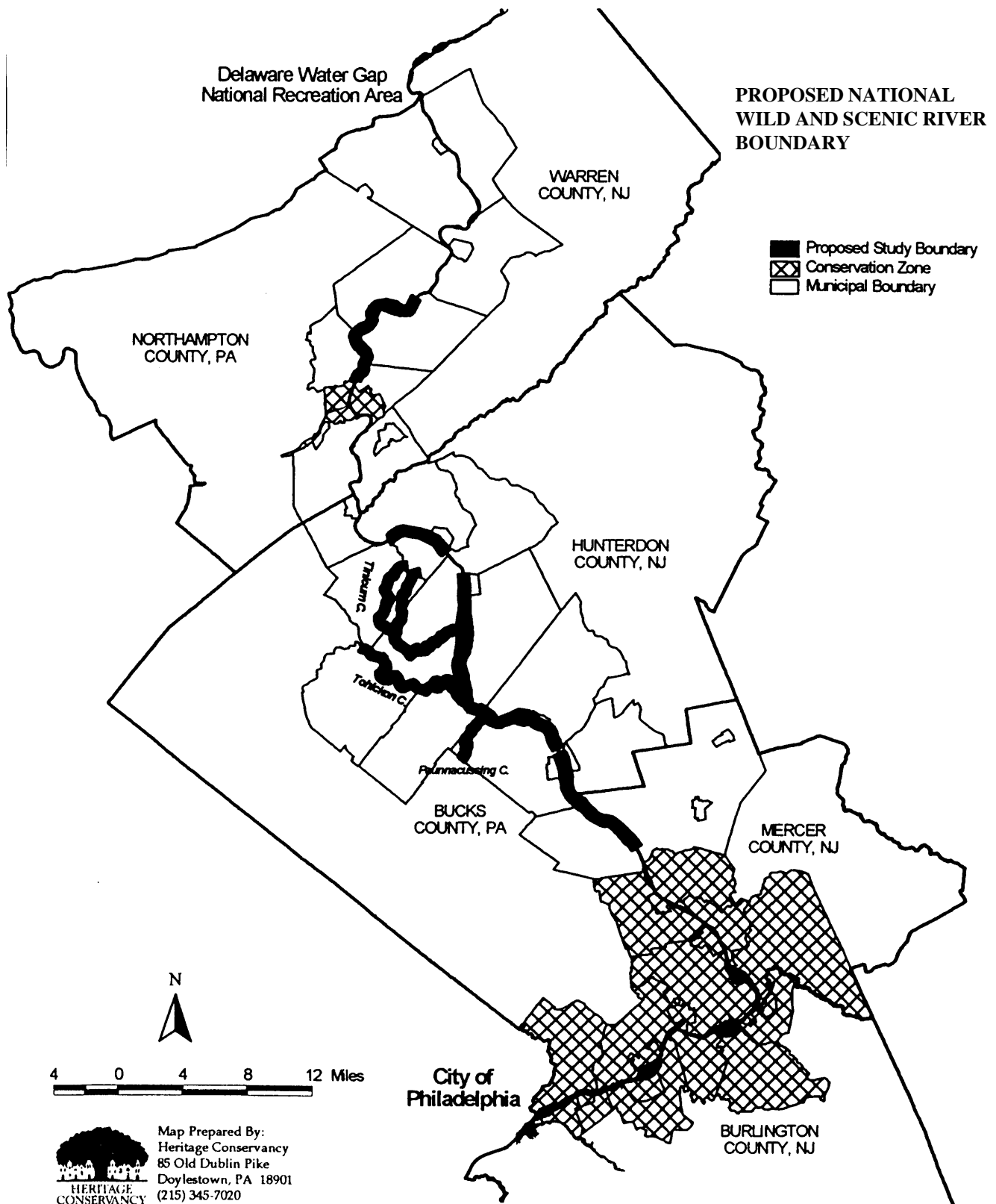
Segment N: Paunacussing Creek in Solebury Township (approx. 3 mi., 4.8 km) – Recreational

The municipalities bordering each of these river segments have passed resolutions supporting the River Management Plan and requesting that these river segments be designated.

In addition, all the municipalities but one along the Musconetcong River and Lockatong and Wicecheoke creeks have passed resolutions requesting that these streams be considered for Wild and Scenic River designation. To provide an adequate review of their eligibility and suitability separate recommendations will be presented at a later date.



LOWER DELAWARE RIVER STUDY AREA





The Lower Delaware National Wild and Scenic River Study

BENEFITS OF DESIGNATION — GENERAL

- prohibits dams and other large scale projects requiring federal permits or funding
- protects important resources
- funding priority is enhanced for projects that implement comprehensive plans by federal, state, foundation and other grant making organizations
- encourages predictable future land use and river management at the federal, state, and local levels
- encourages river municipalities to recognize the river's values in their planning and decision making
- encourages regional river management and coordination across political boundaries
- improves cross state coordination
- can be used to promote compatible economic development and eco-tourism
- minimizes river user impacts and provides a forum for landowners to address their concerns
- serves as an educational tool to develop a local and national awareness of the importance of the Delaware River and its tributaries — strengthens awareness of river value
- encourages appropriate river access

BENEFITS OF DESIGNATION FOR LANDOWNERS

- increased predictability of future land use
- potential for increased property values
- provides a forum to address river-related issues
- protects current land use
- provides a mechanism to minimize the impact of river use on private property



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary	i
MAP: Study Area	iv
Benefits of Designation	v
Section I: Introduction and Study Background	1
Wild and Scenic Rivers Act	2
Requirements for Designation	3
Lower Delaware Wild and Scenic River Study	4
Study Goals	6
Public Involvement	7
River Management Plan	8
The Delaware River	9
MAP: The Delaware River Watershed	10
Section II: Description of Study Area Resources	15
Water Quality	16
MAPS: Plan Study Area	17
Natural Resources	27
Historic Resources	33
Recreational Resources	36
Economic Development	38
Open Space Preservation	39
Section III: Eligibility and Classification	41
Eligibility Requirements	41
Free-flowing Condition	41
Outstandingly Remarkable River Values and Resources	43
Classification	52
Eligibility Findings	53



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Section IV: The Lower Delaware River Management Plan	56
Management Goals	59
Summary of Recommendations for Local Governments	70
Protecting the Resources — The Landowner Role	71
Long Term Management	72

Section V: Suitability	76
Suitability Criteria	76
Suitability Finding	78

Appendices

- A. Public Support for River Corridor Protection**
- B. Study Participants**
- C. Lower Delaware Wild and Scenic Study Act**
- D. Environmental Assessment**
- E. Sample Municipal Resolution Supporting Wild and Scenic River Designation**

Bibliography

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